

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRETOR 05283 081040Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-02
INR-10 L-03 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 HA-05 CAB-05
COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-08 FAA-00 /094 W
-----012285 081042Z /10

O 081010Z SEP 78 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2443
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

UNCLAS PRETORIA 5283

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, PINT, SHUM, MOPS, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: GOVERNMENT CONFIRMS MISSILE DOWNED AIRCRAFT

REF: PRETORIA 5270

1. PRESS ACCOUNTS OF SEPTEMBER 8 REPORT THAT THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT, BILL IRVINE, TOLD THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY ON THE NIGHT OF SEPTEMBER 7 THAT THE AIR RHODESIA CRASH WAS CAUSED BY GUERRILLA ACTION. HE REPORTEDLY SAID "IT IS CLEAR THE DISASTER WAS CAUSED BY THE PLANE BEING HIT BY A HEAT-SEEKING MISSILE NEAR THE INNER STARBOARD ENGINE...THE FULL AND FINAL REPORT OF THE INQUIRY SHOULD BE COMPLETE WITHIN TWO WEEKS AND WILL BE MADE PUBLIC, APART FROM ANY SECTION WHERE THERE ARE SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS." IRVINE ALSO SAID THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL AVIATION AND AIR
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RHODESIA HAD TAKEN ACTION TO REDUCE TO
"ABSOLUTE MINIMUM" THE RISK TO CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT.

2. IRVINE IS ALSO REPORTED TO HAVE TOLD THE ASSEMBLY THAT "THE COUNTRY WILL NOT LET THOSE INNOCENTS GO UNAVENGED. OUR SECURITY FORCES, BLACK AND WHITE, ARE HUNTING DOWN THE MURDER GANG. I CAN PROMISE THE LEADERS

OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, SKULKING IN LUSAKA AND ELSEWHERE,
THAT THEY WHO SEEK TO RIDE THE WIND WILL REAP THE WHIRLWIND.
RHODESIANS WILL NEVER BEND OR BREAK TO THIS KIND OF TERROR
TACTIC."

3. IN THIS CONNECTION, PRESS ACCOUNTS QUOTE A SOUTH
AFRICAN AIRWAYS SPOKESMAN IN JOHANNESBURG AS SAYING THE
TOP MANAGEMENT IS MEETING TODAY (SEPTEMBER8) TO DISCUSS
THIS DEVELOPMENT. HE SAID THEY WOULD OBVIOUSLY COORDINATE
WITH THE RHODESIANS AND TAKE "WHATEVER STEPS ARE NECESSARY."
REGARDING SECURITY MEASURES FOR SAA FLIGHTS INTO RHODESIA.
EDMONDSON

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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